MERRY
XMAS!

Author´s Notes

Hello everyone! Thanks for reading Bleak chapter 6!

Bleak will be from now on a novel with a few illustrations an comic strips here and there.
I hope you can still enjoy the story

Important: Bleak will now be updated every Friday on my website and Sunday on any other websites.It will be updated like this until the end of the currently story arc

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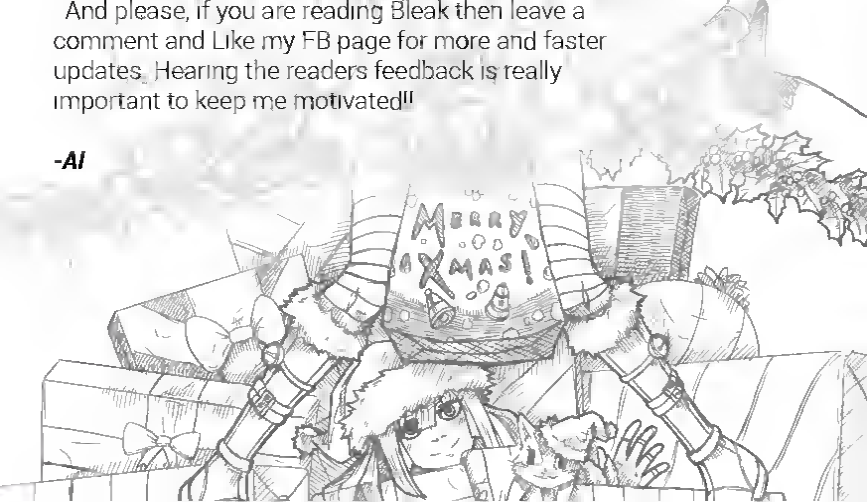
And please, if you are reading Bleak then leave a comment and Like my FB page for more and faster updates. Hearing the readers feedback is really important to keep me motivated!!

-AI



DREAM 6

Knock Knock

I knocked on the door of that old caravan

Rec "Ciao! Didn`t expect to see you so soon." Rec opened the door

"Hey, I want you to show it to me. The Dream Realm or whatever." I would never believe such a thing if I didn't have experienced these weird dreams the past week. Besides, these three little things flying around me aren`t exactly something normal anyone would believe. At this point I decided o give any theory a chance.

Rec "I see. Well, since you are just in time for a nap you will enter REM really quick!"

"Huh? REM??"

Rec "Rapid Eye Movements. Well, to make it short during the night in a normal sleep cycle you have to go through two stages of sleep, the last one is the REM stage and that's when we dream. The first stage takes a really long time so it means you won't be able to dream as soon as you fall asleep. The first stage is called NREM and it mea-"

"W-wait wait! I'm already lost here..." I interrupted him.

Rec " RaHahah! Well I guess that's to be expected, too much info at once, I will tell you the details later. So to make it even shorter. During naps is when your brain will enter REM almost immediately, meaning you will be able to dream as soon as you fall asleep."

"Ok...but what about entering the Dream Realm? Will I be able to just enter my first time?"

Rec "You have been unconsciously entering the Dream Realm several times the past week, probably even before it, so it won't be difficult."

"...I only remember two times"

Rec: "That`s because you entered it while not-lucid, It`s like...like you are there but dreaming a regular dream. Completely forgetting you were there after waking up isn't unusual either for the first timers. By the way, we call people, that wander around the Dream Realm while not-lucid, Dreamwanders." I remembered the dream I had a week ago with that old man. It was only when I noticed I was dreaming that everything started to go crazy.

Rec: "Bornell, can you give us Calea Zacatechichi tea?"

Bornel: "...Sure, I just need a moment to prepare it." The old man grabbed the same plants Rec was holding when I was here earlier.

Vi: "Oh, you are going to do it right now?" I noticed they're all eating dinner. I feel kind of uncomfortable for interrupting.

Rec: "Yup! AF, come with me."

Vi: "Wait, I'm going too!" Rec left the caravan and took me to the other division. Vi followed us while the others continued dinning,

Rec: "This is where we sleep. The beds are behind the curtains, go ahead and pick one." I don't feel comfortable sleeping in someone`s caravan I don't even know. But I decided to know more and here's my chance.

"Wait...how am I supposed to fall asleep? I don`t feel sleepy at all."

Titi Djan: "Here ya go! Z tea for the new guy! Bornell said to watch ya tongues! It's really hot!!" Titi Djan gave us two hot tea cups.

"Z tea? what?" I asked.

Vi: "Calea Zacatechichi. We call it Calea Z or Z tea for short, you know as in "ZzZzZ" haha! It`s made of a special herb, known as the Dream Herb. It`s really relaxing and it`s known for it's effects on dreams."
Vi told me, with a smile on her face.

Titi Djan: "It will help ya fall asleep and increase the probability of ya having more vivid and lucid dreams, and so it also helps staying lucid and entering the Dream Realm."

"I see." I'm kind of hesitant to drink it, but it has a yellowish color and

looks like a normal tea to me.

Rec: "Wait a moment." As I was reaching my lips to the cup Rec stopped me.

Rec: "You better drink it all at once, because it`s seriously nasty."

I looked at the tea, it looks just like a normal tea, how bad can it taste? As we were waiting for it to cool down the other guy called Lock and the kid Dell entered the room while still munching food.

Lock: Did I miss the Zacatechichi time?

Titi Djan: "Nope! They're about to drink it!! Yahaha!"

Dell: "Nice!"

Vi: "C'mon guys, it's his first time drinking it..."

The three of them are watching me closely. Like something funny is about to happen... could the tea taste that bad?

I looked at Rec, and as he started drinking the tea I did the same.

"UBHUHGUHU!!" Both me and Rec roll on the floor like we are about to throw up, it's actually a miracle I didn't. It's with no doubt the worst thing I've ever tasted.

"What the hell!!This is completely disgusting!!"

Rec: "It`s not like I enjoy it either!" It`s so damn disgusting both me and Rec are all red and with teary eyes. The others are just laughing at the scene, especially Lock and Titi.

Rec: "Ok. Now just lie down and try to stay focused as you fall asleep. Try to focus on the thought "I'm dreaming". That way your mind will stay awake as your body falls asleep.

"That sounds difficult..."

Rec: "Well, it is, but there are many techniques to help you with that. One of them you already know, which is drinking Calea Zacatechichi tea. It will help you relax, fall asleep and help you staying lucid.

Another technique is keeping a dream journal, you should keep one from now on.

"Dream Journal?"

Rec: "Just a journal where you write down every dream you have.

Write them right after waking up or you will probably forget them. This will train your mind and help you keep your lucidity, making it easier to have lucid dreams and enter the Dream Realm."

Rec: "But remember, you need to hide it, never show your dream journal to anyone." Rec sounded serious, it made me curious why but I continued listening.

Rec: "And another technique is the Comfort Dbject. Which is simply an object or something you use to relax."

Titi Djan: "Ya know, like the pacifiers or blankets that babies use!"

"...You are kidding right?"

Vi: "Not at all! It's really effective! Rec, Lock and me have something like that!" Wait... the three of them can enter the Dream Realm? I thought it was only Rec.

Vi: "My C D. is a poem, I recite it on my head with my eyes closed and it works really well!"

Titi Djan: "Bro uses a flower ghahaha!"

Lock: "S-shurup Titi, It's not the flower itself, it's its odor. Smell is the best of the five senses when it comes to memory. I use the smell of a cornflower as a way to make me remember old memories and relax."

Rec: "So, what about you AF. Do you have something like that? Something that makes you relax?" I started to think. Do I really have something like that? I like to listen to music but it doesn't really make me fall asleep, hum...

Dh, yeah! I guess I could use that. This "CD" thing feels kinda stupid but I guess I will give it a try.

"Well, I like to use this in my bed room while lying down on my bed..." I show them the goggles with orange lenses that I happen to have with me. Sometimes I take them with me but I rarely wear them outside my bedroom.

Rec: "Goggles?"

"Well... yeah, I wear them in my bedroom, the lens are orange so when you put it on it kinda looks like you are watching a sunset. I find it cool

and peaceful, and I've actually fell asleep once with them on.

Rec: "Rahaha~ Goggles huh? It looks cool I've to admit! Yeah, give it a try."

Rec: "However, Lucid Dreaming is only the first part, the final part is more difficult, that's when you will need to use your Zees to enter the Dream Realm.

"Zees?"

Rec: "Yes, the...three little things flying around you. All Smilers have their own unique Zees."

"And...how do I do that?"

Rec: "Well, the most effective and fast technique would be...throwing yourself off a building."

"Huh?!"

Vi: "The sensation of falling! During a dream that sensation often wakes you up. By doing that you will force a Hypnic Jerk. But instead of actually waking up you will "wake up" in the Dream Realm."

"Just by falling of a building? Won't I simply wake up?"

Rec: "It may happen, but the Calea Z Tea will help you stabilize the dream. And then you'll have to use your Zees."

"How?"

Rec: "Make them appear! Didn't Dehler explain you about that? Like what do you call them?" I remembered last week. I think I understand what he's trying to say.

"Well, he didn't actually explained me anything...I just kinda...discovered by myself."

Rec: "Well, some things can't be explained with words, he simply showed the way for you to discover it yourself!"

"So, while falling I just have to do exactly like last week, is that it?"

Rec: "Correct! Are you ready to go then??"

"I...guess." Rec smiled at my answer instantly, a smile so full of energy and enthusiasm that for an instant creeped me out.

Rec: "Great! Let's Oneironaut then!!

I didn`t expect much, but I lay down, put my goggles on and try to do as he said.

Rec: Oh, right, one more thing! You know how to do a reality check, right?

"... You mean looking at my pocket watch?"

Rec: "Ah, so that's how you do a reality check? Yeah that's it, don't forget to always do a reality check!"

After that final warning they all remained quiet. While focusing on trying to fall asleep I started by simply watching the ceiling of the old van, even something as plain as that looks extremely relaxing when viewed through these orange lenses. It took me a while, but I guess that Calea-something tea really had some effect on me, I`m now really sleepy.

As I felt my eyes getting tired I closed them for some time and tried to focus only on entering the dream while lucid.

But I'm not a patient guy. I was starting to get impatient and annoyed by how long this was taking and then I remembered I couldn't spend much more time here, I have to get home soon or my parents are gonna get worried. I guess I could message them but they would still get mad at me.

"Rec, I just remembered I-"As I opened my eyes to tell Rec I had to go home, I noticed I wasn't in that old caravan anymore. I'm now sitting down in my classroom.

There is no one else inside the classroom, just me, which makes it a strange sight, even more when I noticed that the sun was setting outside. I take off my goggles but notice the light produced by the sunset is exactly the same as the color of the lenses on my goggles.

I feel strange... somehow this feels too realistic for a dream. I can touch, smell and move as if I was in the real world.

I grab my pocket watch just for a quick reality check, it's becoming

more of a habit than an actual reality check since this time I don't really need to confirm this is a dream. My OCD won't let me not look at my pocket watch right now though. Damn, like I needed one more useless and compulsive ritual.

So, I look at my watch to see the hands... wait the hands in my pocket watch...

...

Are... working completely fine...! My clock shows it's 7:30 pm.

If I'm dreaming the hands in the pocket watch are supposed to go crazy and spin completely randomly, that's how I check if this is real world or not. I've also experienced this many times, so... why are they spinning normally right now??

I felt a really cold chill going down my spine and started feeling really hot. It certainly isn't the weather so I guess its anxiety.

The reason I'm feeling like this is because...if the hands on my pocket watch are working fine...then does it mean this entire Saturday has been a dream?

"No...it can't be!" I mean is it really possible for a dream to be that long and detailed? All those people I met in the old caravan, going to Hart`s house... everything was... just a dream?